DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 017 EC 171 726

TITLE	Working with Children Who Have Special Needs.
INSTITUTION	Michigan State Dept. of Social Services, Lansing.
REPORT NO	DSS-96-(1-84)
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	33p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Caregivers; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Gifted; Hearing Impairments; Mental Retardation; Physical Disabilities; *Special Education; Special Health Problems; Visual Impairments

ABSTRACT

The guidelines are intended to provide caregivers with ways of working with children who have special needs. Following general guidelines on working with special needs children, information is summarized on the following exceptionalities: special health needs, physical needs, sight needs, hearing needs, speech needs, intellectual needs, emotional needs, and gifted. Information is provided on such topics as giving instructions, getting the child's interest, self-help skills, learning through other senses, and social experiences. Additional tips for activities are presented for each of the exceptionalities. A final section presents suggestions for working with children with more than one special need and talking with parents. (CL)

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WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

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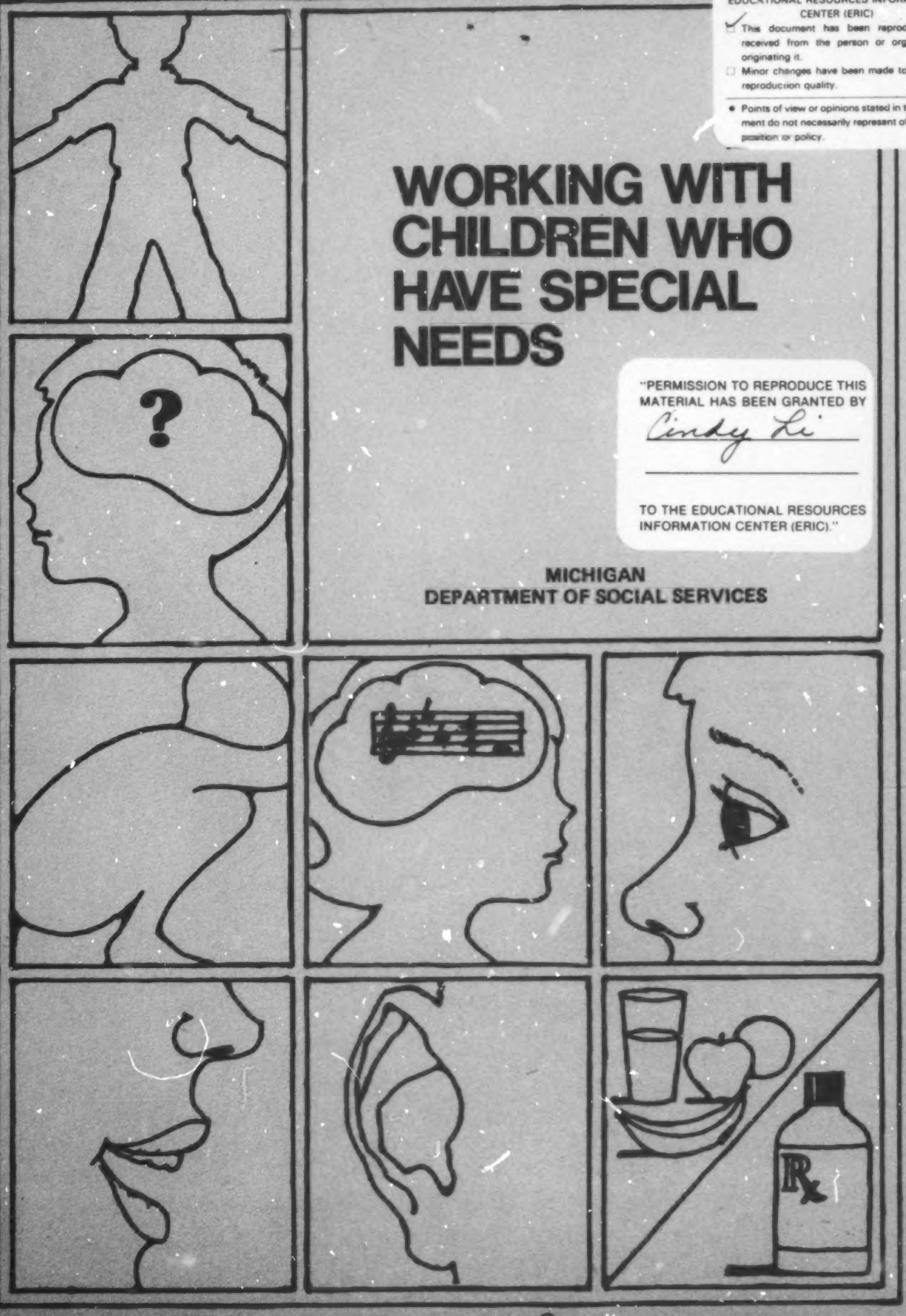

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INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs are, first of all, children. They have the same basic needs as other children. They are curious about their world. They love trips to the park, picture books, toys, and fun games and activities. They want to learn.

Children with special needs should be given activities which they are able to do. They need to experience success and learn how to deal with failures. These children should be given special care for their problems, but should not be treated as if they are different. In most cases, there will be more things these children can do than things they cannot do.

This book describes ways of working with children who have special needs. In it are some of the things which you, a Provider, can do to help these children learn.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

Plan your Activities ahead of time.

- Use the Child Growth and Development Booklets as guides in considering the ability level of each child.
- Be familiar with the materials you will be using and have them ready.

Teach in simple steps.

- Praise and encourage children with special needs as each step is learned.

Offer directions several times and in different ways.

- Use the children's name.
- Be sure they are paying attention to you.
- Use simple, clear directions.

Show and tell the children how an activity will be done.

- Use simple words.
- Name the materials you are using.
- Do the activity once while the children are watching.
- Guide each child's hands through the activity as you explain each step.

Allow sufficient time for children with special needs to complete a task.

- Never force children to do a task beyond their ability.
- Allow plenty of time for the children to enjoy the activity in a relaxed setting.
- Let the children finish one activity before beginning a new one.

Give the children firsthand experiences.

- Children learn by doing. "Soft and furry" is meaningful when they have touched or petted a soft, furry animal or a piece of material.
- Tasks which must be done daily, such as feeding or caring for a pet, will teach children responsibility.
- Use games so that practicing a skill is fun.
- Include these children in group play and group activities. Children learn from each other.
- Field trips are valuable experiences for children with special needs.

SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

Although children with special health needs may be restricted in many ways, they should be included in all learning activities. While one child may need to remain at home in bed, another may need a special diet or medication. These problems should not prevent the children from participating in activities that will help them learn and grow. If a child must stay at home in bed, you will want to share the following ideas with the child's parents. When a doctor has prescribed medicine, bed rest, or a special diet, follow his directions exactly.

Children In Bed

Some children with special health needs may need to remain in bed. If the child will be in the day care center, appropriate equipment, such as a sturdy cot, will need to be available.

- Provide interesting and exciting experiences for the children. Keep activities simple and do not allow children to become too tired.
- Remember to have a good source of light near the bed to prevent eye strain.
- Give these children learning materials that are easy to handle. A piece of plywood or a large tray over the lap will keep materials together.
- Include the children in quiet group activities. If they cannot get to the group, take the group to them. Sit on chairs around the bed and sing songs, tell or read stories or have fingerplay games.
- Include the children in quiet group activities outside when they are able to be out-of-doors.
- Keep informed about any changes in the doctor's orders which would allow the children to sit in a chair or to get up for short periods of time.

Children With Special Diets Of Medication

Some children may require a special diet or medication. They can usually be taught in the same ways as other children in your care. The doctor may order medicine and special diets, depending on the amount of exercise the children get. You will need to keep the activity level for these children the same every day. Be certain that they do not miss regular medicine or meal times.

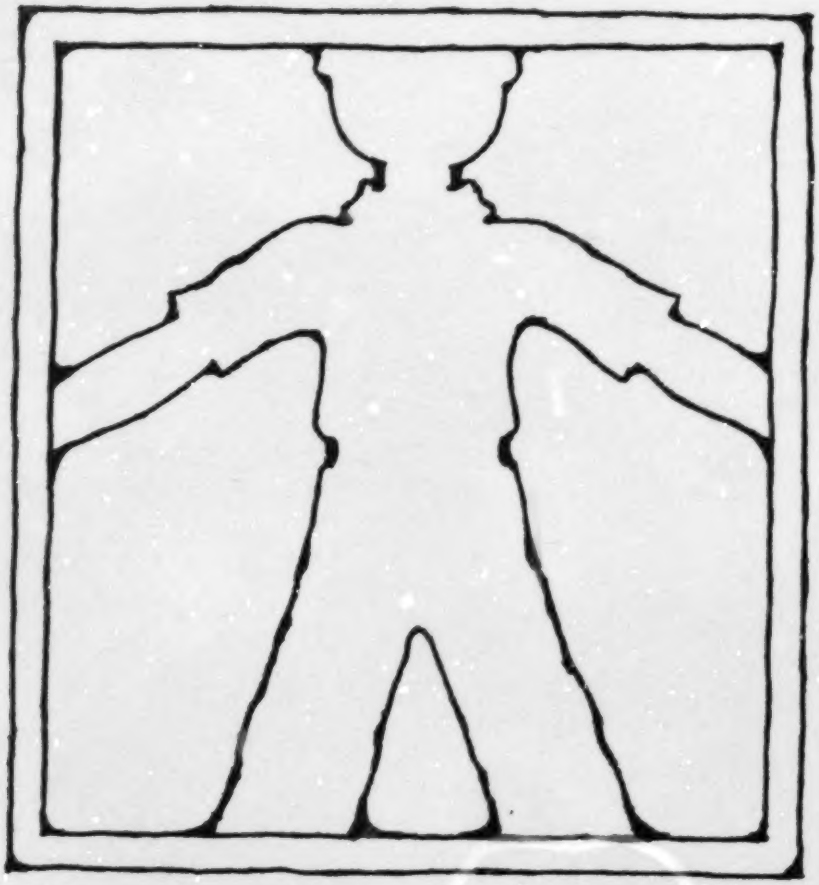
Children With Seizures

Children who have seizures usually have the same abilities to learn and develop as other children do. Unless these children have other problems, you will be able to use the same teaching techniques as those used with other children in the group. Special attention will be needed only when a seizure occurs.

Extra Tips For Activities

1. Coloring, pasting, or just looking at interesting books are fun experiences for children with health needs.
2. Place a bird feeder on a window sill or in a nearby tree for the children to watch.
3. Let these children help you pick out records, stories or other materials to be used with the class.
4. Let them help set the table and clean up after meals.

PHYSICAL NEEDS



PHYSICAL NEEDS

The greatest difficulty for children with physical needs is learning to use and control the muscles of their bodies. Some of these children may need to learn to build up the strength in their muscles. Other children may need to learn to use other muscles for skills such as drawing, dressing, or eating.

Remember, many learning skills do not require the use of damaged muscles. Careful planning is needed to direct the children's learning. Give help when needed, but allow them to try new tasks independently.

These children often lack social skills because they are not included in groups with other children. Singing, listening to stories and sharing picture books can provide times for children to develop friendships and learn to imitate desirable social behavior. When given the chance to be part of a group, these children will become less afraid of others and begin to feel secure and wanted. Other children are less likely to fear and make fun of children with physical needs as they learn to play together. As friendships develop through group play, the other children become excited about helping children with physical needs learn new skills.

Exercise

Exercise is very important to help children with physical needs develop their muscles.

- A doctor may order physical exercise to strengthen weak muscles. Follow the exercise program exactly as ordered.
- Encourage the children to move about as independently as possible using rails, wheelchairs, crutches or walkers.
- Include these children in group indoor exercises, but remember the limits of their body development. Reward them for joining in, but never force them to take part in an activity.

Outdoor Exercise

Outdoor exercise is very necessary.

- Allow enough time for putting on extra clothes.
- Include children with physical needs in group activities.
- Plan games that exercise weak and strong muscles. Some games might be fingerplays, puzzles, and catching a ball. Older children will enjoy playing marbles, or jacks. More active games could include hopscotch and tag.

Field Trips

Include children with physical needs on field trips. Go over the route of the trip ahead of time and consider these things:

- The amount of time needed for the trip.
- transportation,
- extra help needed,
- hills and steps to be climbed, and
- available toilet facilities.

Self-Help Skills

- Clothes which are easy to put on, such as pants or skirts with elastic waistbands and pull-over shirts, help make dressing easier.

- When learning to feed themselves, these children will need a comfortable chair, and plates held to the table by modeling clay or a suction cup. Select foods which are easy to scoop with a spoon such as peanut butter, applesauce, or mashed potatoes.

- Give the children finger foods to eat when they learn to feed themselves. Some good finger foods are pieces of an orange with the peel on it, a small section of apple, chunks of soft meat, cheese cubes, and diced vegetables.

Learning To Suck

For an infant who has trouble sucking a bottle, you make the hole in the nipple of the bottle bigger. Another way to teach sucking is to half-fill a straw with a favorite drink. Place your finger over the end of the straw to keep the liquid in it. Then put the other end of the straw in the child's mouth. If needed, help the child close his or her lips around the straw. As you let the liquid drip into the child's mouth, you can control the flow by lifting your finger on the end of the straw. The children will soon learn to suck on the straw to get the liquid.

Learning To Swallow And Chew

Place soft, smooth food on the back of the tongue and gently stroke the throat. This will help the children learn to swallow. To help children learn to chew, first, show them how you chew. Then put your hand on their jaw and show them how to move their jaws. Let children try to feed themselves.

Drooling

Children with certain physical needs may drool when they try to talk.

- Never appear upset by drooling.

- Show and explain how to close the mouth and swallow.

- Always praise attempts to talk or make new sounds.

Extra Tips For Activities

1. Use a "buddy system" with children who have physical problems. This will help them get around and participate in activities.

2. A string attached securely to a play object and looped around the waist will prevent losing the object.

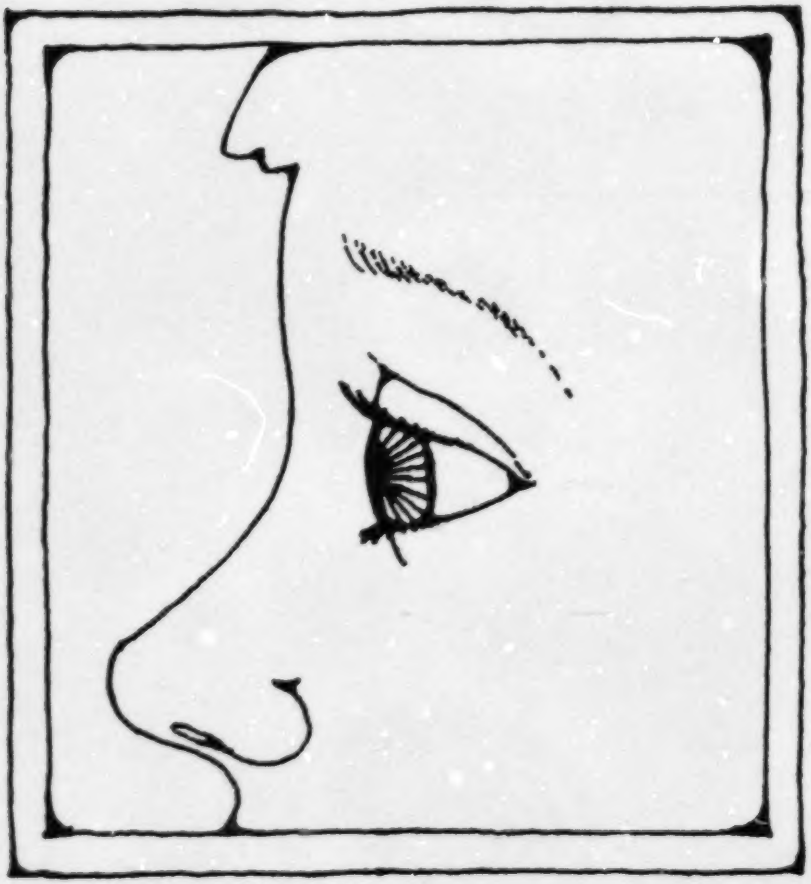
3. Bells on an elastic wrist band will allow these children to take part in a rhythm band.

4. Homemade materials are great! You can adjust the size and sturdiness to the individual child's level of development.

5. Puzzles can be made easier to handle by attaching a wooden spool to each piece. Children who have difficulty with hand movement will be able to lift, or push the pieces into place.

6. Large, sturdy books are easier for children with physical needs to hold.

SIGHT NEEDS



SIGHT NEEDS

Children with sight problems need to learn from firsthand experiences. They must be taught to move and explore by using senses other than sight. They can learn many of the same skills that other children can. However, it will take more time to tell them and show them how to do the skill.

Learning Through Other Senses

- Use clear, simple directions.
- Provide toys and other objects to feel, taste, smell, and hear. Teach these children to tell differences between objects by using these senses.
- Music is a good way for these children to learn to use their bodies and to move around more easily. It can be good exercise for both large and small muscles.
- Let the children feel your neck and face as you make a sound or word. This will help them learn to talk. Help them move their own mouths to make sounds correctly.
- Give the children opportunities to feel many different objects, and then tell you how the object feels. Help the children learn what each item is.
- Walks in the community are good times to talk about smells, feelings, and sounds. These children can learn to identify stores by listening for cash registers and bells and by smelling foods. They can learn about walking surfaces by learning the sounds and feel of gravel, dirt, and concrete. Traffic sounds are learned by listening for car horns and brakes. In the country, these children can take walks to learn the feel, sound, and smell of flowers, trees, and animals.

Self-Help Skills

Children with sight problems need extra help in learning to care for themselves.

- Expect them to play with their food and explore the objects around them by putting the objects in their mouths.
- Use a small piece of bread as a "pusher." This technique will help them find food on the plate.
- A small suction cup or piece of modeling clay on the bottom of the plate will help prevent the plate from slipping.
- Guide the children's hands as they learn to hold and lift eating utensils.
- Always place eating utensils and glasses in the same place at meals to help children learn where they are located.

Controlling Facial Muscles

Often children with sight problems need to learn to control their face muscles. They cannot imitate the expressions of others, and cannot see what their own faces look like.

- Allow children to touch your mouth as you smile and explain

that a happy face always shows a smile.

- When you see the children smile, frown, or make other faces, describe their expressions to them. This will make them more aware of the way it feels to move the face muscles.

Social Experiences

Social experiences are very important in early childhood.

- Encourage these children to face the person who is speaking to them. This shows others that they are listening.
- As children learn to participate and share in games and activities, they will be accepted by others. As a part of the group, children will learn that others are fun to be with.
- Fears are normal in children with sight needs. You must give these children your support and love to help them overcome their fears.
- Sometimes children with sight needs rock, roll their heads, and wave their hands in front of their eyes. They often behave this way because they have nothing else to do. By giving the children interesting and stimulating activities, these behaviors will occur less often.

Correcting Eye Problems

A doctor may order glasses, patching, medicine, exercises, or surgery for children with sight needs.

- When these children first get glasses, you will have to teach them how to wear them.
- Praise the children for wearing their glasses. Glasses are strange to children, and they may fear them or be bothered by them.
- Children should also learn to take care of their glasses by placing them in a nearby safe place at naptime and by never playing with them like a toy.

- o If children have "lazy eye," the strong eye can be patched to strengthen the weak muscles.
- o Eye drops or ointments may be used to reduce sight irritations.
- o Children may do special eye exercises to strengthen muscles.
- o Surgery can be used to strengthen muscles that control eye sight.

Extra Tips For Activities

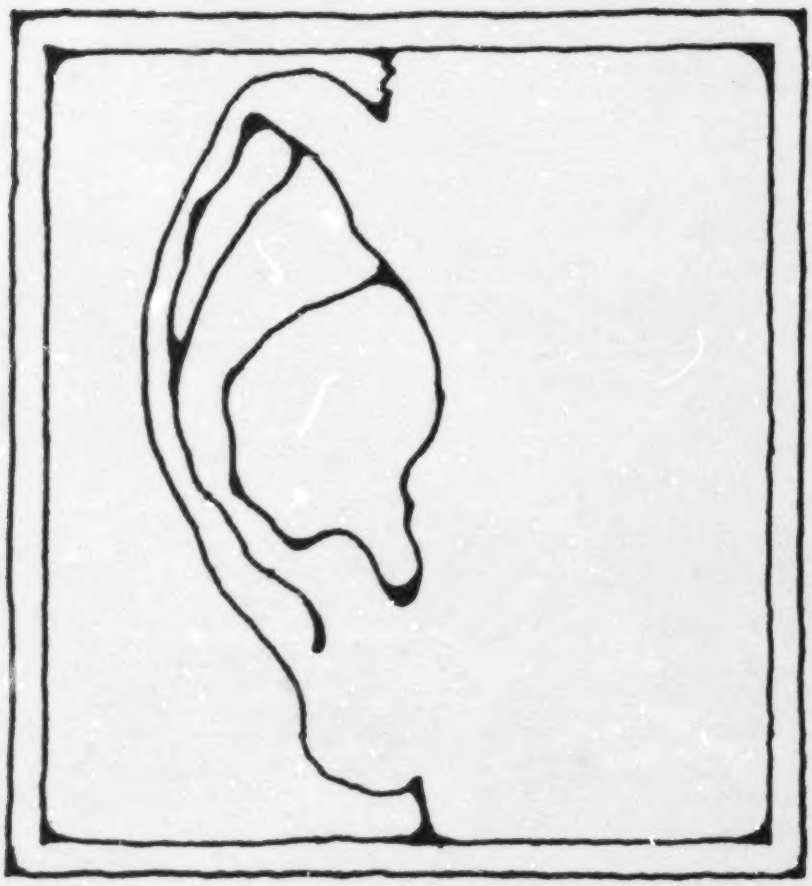
1. Children with some sight can enjoy looking at large print books with a magnifying glass.
2. Always be sure work areas have good lighting.
3. During coloring or painting activities, blind children can play with toys of different textures. Balls made of different textures, size, and shapes provide chances for these children to explore and develop the sense of touch.
4. Older blind children may be taught to

read from books written in braille. Braille is a way of spelling words using many different raised dots on paper. The blind person reads by feeling the dots with the fingers. You can get special training to teach braille.

5. Older children will enjoy reading to children with sight needs.

6. Use words which children understand from their own experiences.

HEARING NEEDS



HEARING NEEDS

Very few children with hearing losses are totally deaf. Most of them can hear some sounds. These children need your clear, simple speech, the expressions on your face, and your gestures to learn the meaning of words. They must learn by seeing and touching. Hard-of-hearing children use their bodies to feel the vibrations of sounds. These children can learn to do most of the things other children can do. Encourage them to exercise and play active games.

Learning To Speak

Children with hearing needs must be taught how to speak. They need a good model for speech, so do not exaggerate your voice too much when you are talking. You should have a good understanding of normal language development.

- Make language a part of all activities during the day. Talk to the children during activities such as eating, bathing, cleaning, and bedtime.
- Hard-of-hearing children should be praised for responding to sounds and also for making them. Draw the children's attention to all sounds around them and talk about sounds.
- Wait until you have the children's attention before speaking. Talk carefully, clearly, and slowly to them while they watch your face. This will help these children learn the meaning of words by looking and listening.

Hearing Aids

A hearing aid will be a great help for some children with hearing needs.

- Check the hearing aid daily to see that it is working properly.
- When children are learning to wear a hearing aid, be patient as you teach the proper ways to care for it. Reward the children for wearing it properly. They may be easily upset when beginning to wear a hearing aid. There may be too much noise for the children during this time, so plan quieter activities than usual. Gradually introduce more noise to these children and they will usually adjust to it.
- Other children may ask about the hearing aid. Give them a simple explanation and teach them to accept hard-of-hearing children as members of the group.

Lip Reading

Children with hearing needs learn language by watching lip movements. This is called "lip reading" or "speech reading". When using lip reading:

- there should be few other movements to distract children,
- seat these children close to the speaker, with other children behind them,

- start by using simple words and phrases to explain objects and activities the children can touch and see.

- introduce new words gradually, and

- use several ways of telling children with hearing needs about new ideas. They may have missed a word or two in your instructions, but may understand the idea if it is repeated in different ways.

Sign Language

Many deaf and hard-of-hearing people learn to use sign language as well as speech to communicate with others. Sign language is a way of "talking," using movement of the hands and fingers. Words are formed by the way the hands and fingers are shaped and moved. Some words do not have a sign, so "finger spelling" may be used. Each letter of the alphabet has its own sign. Talk to the parent of the child or your local speech and hearing center about special training which might be available to help you learn sign language.

Social Experiences

Children with special hearing needs may avoid others and may not pay attention in activities. Their lack of hearing may isolate them from other children unless you include them in group activites.

- Reward them for participating in a group activity and encourage their efforts to be independent.

- Give the children responsibilities for small jobs such as caring for a pet.

- Help hard-of-hearing children learn the meaning of right and wrong. When they behave in an undesirable way, show them what was done wrong. Use words and gestures to show them the desirable behavior. The expression on your face is a good way to show whether a behavior is desirable or undesirable. Always reward children by using praise, a smile or a hug when they behave well.

Extra Tips For Activities

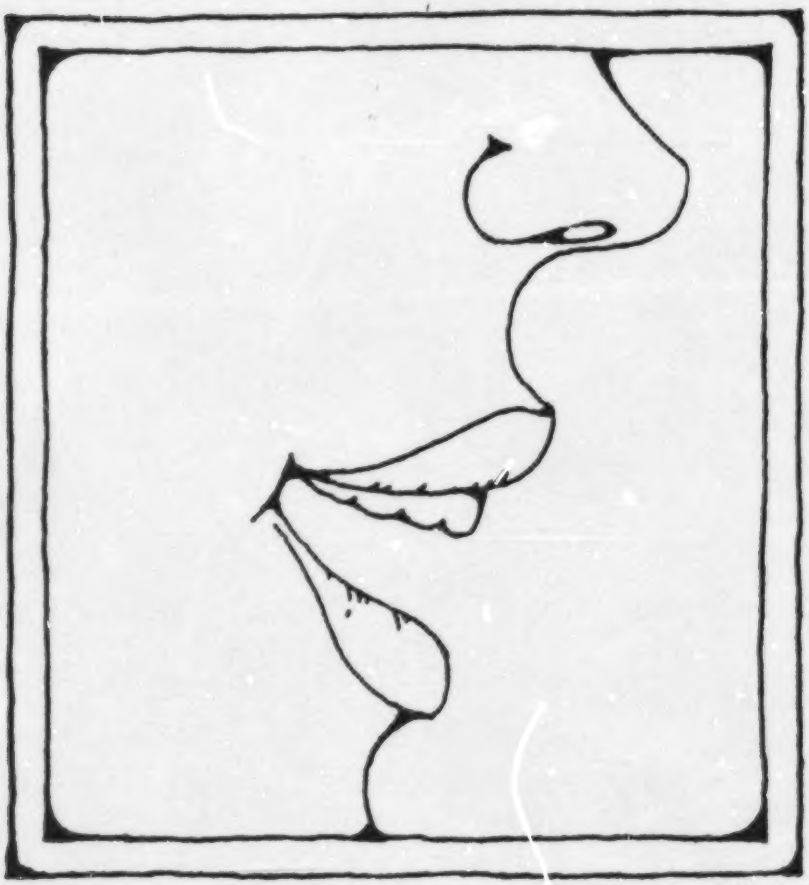
1. Use a mirror, blackboard, or paper when you show these children a skill.

2. A flashlight can be used to draw attention to body parts that you are talking about. When working individually with the children, point out parts of the mouth used in making sounds with a flashlight and mirror. After using materials near the mouth, be sure to clean them with an antiseptic.

3. Firsthand experiences can help hard-of-hearing children understand speech.

4. Music can be especially useful with hard-of-hearing children. Even though they may not be able to hear music, they can feel the vibrations of rhythms. Praise these children for any response to these vibrations. Keep a written record of the sounds and words these children make so that you can share their progress with their parents.

SPEECH NEEDS



SPEECH NEEDS

Children with speech needs may be slower in learning because they have difficulty understanding or speaking to others. Some children will communicate their wants and needs through gestures, body movements, or eye motion. You will need to learn the meaning of each individual child's signals. Speaking is very important in learning. Children need to talk, listen, and be listened to. Using simple words to describe familiar objects, wants, or needs will help these children develop language skills. The more serious a speech problem, the more difficult learning will be. Your attitude will affect these children's feelings and their willingness to try to correct their speech. If you become upset by the children's problems, the problems will increase.

Stuttering

Many children go through a period of stuttering between the ages of two and five. Children often outgrow this, so ignore stuttering and praise the children for speaking correctly. If stuttering continues, it may be caused by nervousness. Try to find out the cause by watching for situations which increase the stuttering.

- When a situation makes the children nervous, stand nearby and give your support, but do not talk for the children.
- Let the children finish their own sentences.
- When the children are overtired, they may stutter more often. So, they need plenty of rest!
- It is better to judge improvement over a period of several weeks, rather than a short period of time.

Other Speech Needs

Some speech needs are caused because the mouth area has not formed correctly. Surgery may be the only way to correct the problem. The children may need to do daily exercises to improve speech. Follow the suggestions that the doctor or speech therapist makes for helping these children.

Some children add sounds or leave sounds out of words. These children must first learn to hear the way they say words. For example, if a child says "top" for "stop", have the child say poems or rhymes which have "st" words in them. In this way the child will learn to say many words using the problem sound.

- Teach children to form words that contain the difficult sound. Reward them for trying.
- Require the children to say words slowly at first.
- Help the children pay careful attention to all of the sounds in words.
- Keep practice sessions short.

Talking With Others

Expressing ideas to others may be difficult for children with speech needs. These children need to feel that what they say is worthwhile and that others wish to listen.

- Help the children feel comfortable speaking in a group by asking simple questions which require a one or two word answer. As the children gain confidence, you can require longer answers.
- Reward the children with praise

and a smile for answering your questions.

- Listen to the children when they speak.

Extra Tips For Activities

1. Use clear speech as you sing action songs.
2. Tell stories that encourage children to speak.
3. Use pictures and music to help children express ideas.
4. Encourage children to express their ideas to puppets.
5. Blowing a horn or blowing into water with a straw is a fun exercise for the muscles around the mouth.
6. Allow the children to make faces and stick out their tongues while looking in a mirror.
7. Licking a lollipop or jam off the lips will strengthen muscles around the mouth.

INTELLECTUAL NEEDS

INTELLECTUAL NEEDS

Every new experience children with intellectual needs have will help them grow and develop into healthy, happy people. Give them a variety of experiences. And remember, these children really are more like other children than they are different from them.

Children with intellectual needs may progress slowly. Therefore, repetition, practice, and imitation will be necessary for these children to learn. Patience, kindness and consistent praise from you will make learning easier and more enjoyable for them.

Giving Instructions

- Make the instructions simple.
- Make sure the children know you are talking to them.
- Speak to them at eye level.
- Start with one-step instructions. Later, give instructions that ask children to do more.

Learning To Walk

- Get down on the floor and play with the children.
- Encourage the children to roll around, grab hold of your hand and stand for a moment or two.
- Reward each step.

Self-Help Skills

Special training in the area of self-help will be needed for these children. Finger feeding is an important step which must be learned before children begin to use a spoon.

- Mealtimes should be pleasant experiences for children. A lot of practice is needed to teach these children to eat.
- Never hurry mealtimes. Give praise for their efforts and successes.
- Bright, colorful food will attract the children's interest.
- Bite-sized pieces of toast, raisins or dry cereal are easier for the children to hold when learning to feed themselves.
- Name foods that the children are eating.
- Place newspaper or old sheets under the chair.
- Give children chances to try new foods.
- When children can eat larger pieces of food, you may want to give them a slice of peeled apple, part of a hard-boiled egg, a whole green bean or a piece of banana.

Spoon Feeding

- Use soft foods that stick to the spoon.
- Wrapping the handle of the spoon with a cloth may make it easier for the children to hold.
- Standing behind the children, guiding their hands and using simple directions.

Dressing

First, children can take clothes off. Later, they learn to put them on.

- Try to make dressing as much fun as possible.
- Talk about the names of clothes as the children learn to dress. "A red shirt today!" is a clear simple description of the piece of clothing the children will wear.
- Allow the children to help with dressing, even though it may take longer.
- Provide a comfortable place and allow enough time for dressing.
- Make sure the children are paying attention.
- Mark the back or front of clothes.
- Always put clothes on in the same order.

Health Habits

Mongoloid children often get colds. It is important that they learn to take care of themselves. Washing their hands, covering their mouths when coughing, and blowing and wiping their noses are some good habits to teach these children.

Speech

A good speech model is also needed.

- Avoid "baby" talk.
- Use simple, clear words to name foods, body parts, and objects.
- Leave out extra words which are likely to confuse the children. For example, "It's time to eat," is easier to understand than, "Not it's time for you to come and eat."
- Listen to the children when they speak.
- Always reward any attempt to imitate your speech.
- Encourage the children to ask for food, toys, and other objects. When you know they can say "milk", "bread", or something very close to these words, require the children to say the word before you give the desired food or object.
- Talk about the things you see and do on field trips. Plan art or storytelling activities that relate to these trips.
- Never force the children to perform in front of others.
- Use clues to give words meaning. As you talk, look at the object, point, use gestures and facial expressions, nod your head, and shrug your shoulders.

Social Experiences

Children with intellectual needs usually play alone or beside other children rather than play with them. When slow learners begin playing with others, they usually play best with younger children. These younger children are closer to their stage of development and are more likely to accept and understand their

behavior. Older children may laugh at or tease children with learning needs. Try to make sure that this does not happen with your group. You can help the children by making sure that the time they spend with other children is a fun learning experience.

- Reward the children for taking part in group activities.
- Praise other children for including the children with learning needs in their play. Remember children learn a great deal from other children.
- Redirect activities which seem to be getting too rough or boring for the group.
- Keep playtimes short so that the children don't become confused, overexcited or tired.
- Set clear limits for the group's behavior during playtime and be consistent in enforcing the rules.
- Teach the children to take turns. Do not expect them to always give up the toy they are playing with. Other children should not have to give up their turn or toy. You may need to remind children with learning needs when their turn will come.

Helping Them Learn

Children with intellectual needs take longer to learn skills.

- Clear simple directions help these children learn easily.
- Children learn best through first-hand experiences. Touching and handling objects make understanding easier.
- Make activities exciting and fun.
- Clap your hands, smile, and praise the children for each success.
- Do not allow these children to become tired or lose interest in activities.
- Repeat the activity as often as necessary.

Extra Tips For Activities

1. Allow the children to run, play, and join in group activities outdoors. Jumping rope, hopscotch, and circle games help develop and strengthen muscles.
2. Clapping, fingerplays, and playing on a swing or seesaw, will help the children learn to use muscles.
3. Provide time for waterplay such as washing plastic dishes or playing outside with a bucket of water.
4. Allow the children to turn cold water faucets "on" and "off" for you.
5. Outdoors is also a good place to practice pouring skills. Leaves and dirt can be poured into containers of all sizes.
6. A mirror will keep the children interested in learning to dress themselves.
7. Large shoes can be fun to play with. Encourage efforts to put them on and walk around.
8. A small mark placed on the inner edge of the sole of each shoe will help the children put shoes on the correct feet. Tell the children to put the shoes on so that the marks are close together.
9. Talk to the children while you work.

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Name objects, and explain what they are used for. Let the children use them, too.

10. Each day, allow them to take turns placing an "x" on the calendar. Talk about what day it is. Tell them what you will be doing that day. This will help the children get used to your routine.

11. Let the children break up soda crackers or graham crackers in a paper bag using a rolling pin.

12. Cookie cutters can be used to teach different shapes.

13. Let children practice counting vegetables and fruits as you prepare them to eat.

14. Let children use a potato peeler in preparing carrots, potatoes, and apples. This is a good exercise for small muscles of the fingers. Letting children beat eggs with a hand beater, stir a cake batter, or pour liquids can also help develop small muscles.

15. At first, teach the children to pour by using peas, rice, or beans. Let the children practice pouring water in the sink or in a tub on the floor or table before trying expensive liquids such as milk or juice.

16. The kitchen is also a good place to teach what words such as "soft", "hard", "dry", "cold", "hot", "big", and "little" mean.

17. Activities in the kitchen also provide many opportunities to learn safety rules.

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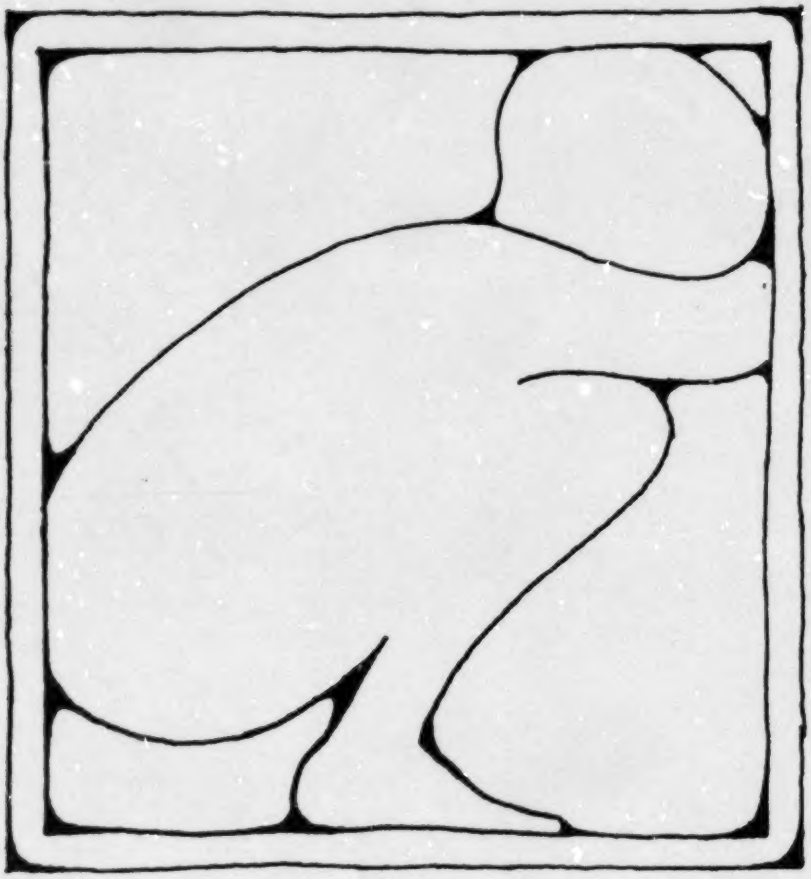
EMOTIONAL NEEDS



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EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Emotional or behaviorial problems may develop in any child. Children with emotional needs may find it difficult to learn. They may be unable to make friends or cooperate with other children in the group. Showing self-confidence or behaving in a desirable way in a stress situation is usually very difficult for these children.

Many children show stress by getting angry or daydreaming. You will need to decide when these behaviors are so frequent that they interrupt learning. The most effective day care center is a friendly, happy place where daily routines are followed.

Many emotional needs can be helped by first deciding what undesirable behaviors the children have. The behaviors which interfere most with learning are the ones you should try to eliminate first.

Always remember that the children with emotional needs need your love and patience. Do not get discouraged or angry with them. Try to be calm and firm when dealing with the problems these children have.

Many times it is helpful to have children with emotional needs talk about their feelings. Assure the children that having these feelings, whether happy or angry is "all right".

Social Experiences

- Reward the children for playing with others.
- Always praise these children for behaving well.
- When encouraging children to take part in group activities, you may need to remain beside them while they are in the group.
- Encourage quiet activities until the children get used to the group.
- Do not single these children out unnecessarily in group activities.

Getting The Children's Interest

Children with emotional needs have difficulty paying attention for even short periods of time.

- Choose activities you know the children like.
- Use gimmicks--talk softly, get excited, put mystery in your voice.
- Reward any sign of paying attention.
- Keep times when these children are involved in a particular activity very short at first. As the children learn to be less active for longer times, you can gradually require that they take part in longer, quieter activities.

Extra Tips For Activities

1. Roleplaying (acting out simple stories or playing the part of another person) is fun for these children. It can help them work out feelings through another character.
2. Puppet play is another enjoyable activity for children. As in roleplaying, these children can express feelings through another character.

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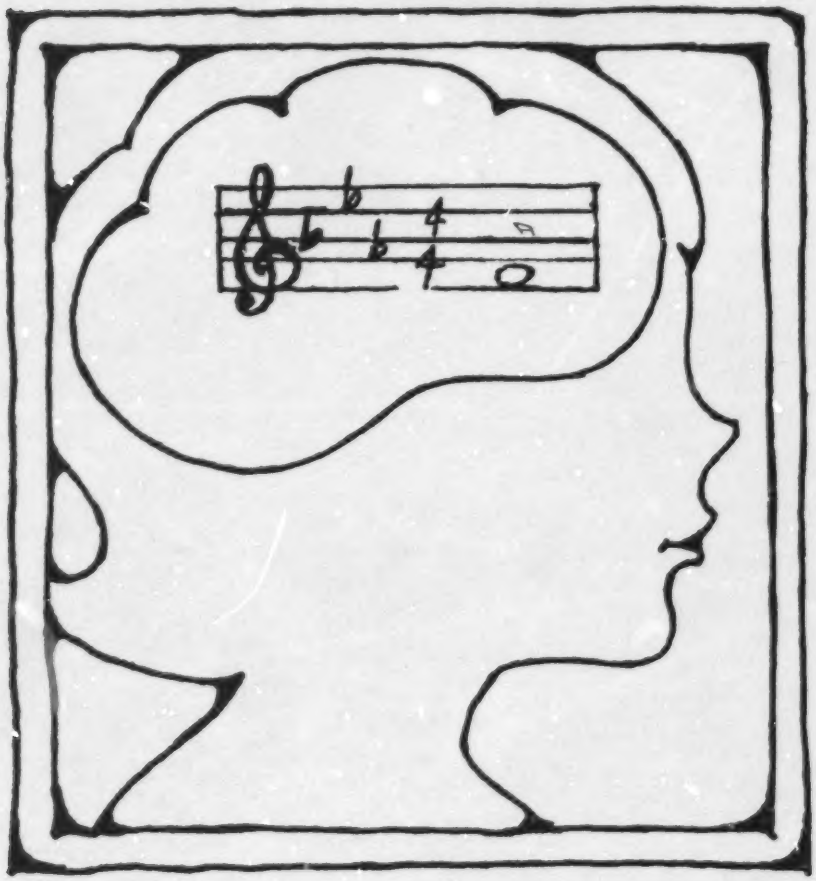
3. Use art and music activities to help express feelings.

4. Encourage older children to write diaries or stories about how they feel.

5. "Feelings" collages can be really fun! Pictures of faces that smile, laugh, frown, or cry are interesting to look at.

GIFTED CHILDREN



GIFTED CHILDREN

Gifted children have many interests. They are very capable, curious, and possess an unbelieveable desire to learn. The greatest challenge in working with gifted children is providing many varied and stimulating experiences. At a very young age, gifted children delight in exploring their small world and seem to have an endless supply of questions for the adults around them. As these children grow older, their interests and abilities increase.

Special needs of gifted children

- Gifted children need a "stepped-up" program of learning. Since their ability to learn is more advanced, their education program should match their cognitive ability. This means that Teachers or Providers who work with these children should plan a learning program that is more advanced than their actual age.

- Gifted children benefit from being with other children. These children particularly enjoy being with others who have similar abilities and interests. This will keep them from feeling different. Other gifted children can provide the kinds of challenges and interests that these children need. When gifted children do not have an opportunity to be with other gifted children, they may become self-conscious about their ability or special talents. Sometimes they may appear shy or withdrawn, simply because they do not have anyone to share their experiences with.

- Gifted children need enriching, challenging activities to keep them from becoming bored. Activities should be planned in many areas of learning. Gifted children need many firsthand experiences as well as opportunities for speaking and writing. Activities should encourage these children to explore, ask questions, discover their own answers, and to be creative thinkers.

Extra Tips For Activities

1. Provide activities that will strengthen these children's special talent. For example, if a child has a special musical talent, try to contact a person in your community that has the same interest. Or, if a child has high mechanical abilities, provide building tools for him or her to use.

2. Gifted children usually love to read. A trip to the local library or the bookmobile will give these children an opportunity to select their own books.

3. Provide a quiet place for these children to read or work. Encourage them to tell the other children in your group about their interests.

4. Encourage gifted children to tutor others. They will especially enjoy reading short stories to other children or writing stories for them.

5. Provide many opportunities for these children to be creative. Art is one way to encourage creativity and exploration.

6. Provide pencil and paper for gifted children who are able to express themselves through writing. A typewriter or tape recorder can be challenging for these children, also.

7. Encourage the children to begin collections or scrapbooks related to their interests.

SUGGESTIONS

CHILDREN WITH MORE THAN ONE SPECIAL NEED

Sometimes, children may have more than one special need. A child might have physical problems and be blind. Or, a child may have learning and hearing needs. Whatever needs children have, you will need to provide experiences that will best suit their abilities and needs. Talk with the parents about the special problems their child(ren) with two or more special needs might have.

TALKING WITH PARENTS

Parents of children with special needs are very concerned about their children. They are interested in providing their children with as many experiences as possible. Parents want to do what is best for their child. They are interested in the child's behavior, activities, and environment. You can help parents understand their children's needs by being honest and positive. Establishing communication between you and the parent is important.

Avoid labelling the children when talking to the parents. Explain to them what needs their children have. Explain what you are doing to help their children in the day care home and offer suggestions on ways they can help in their own home. If parents want a more detailed explanation of their children's special need(s), they should arrange a time to discuss this with a doctor or other professionals.

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DSS Publication 96 (1-84)

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